

Dear Ms. Melissa Abdullah;

Please accept this letter on behalf of the undersigned in support of a consortium of Montana institutions, headed by Montana Department of Labor and Industry, in response to the U.S. Department of Labor's H-1B TechHire Partnership Grant Funding Opportunity Announcement titled TechSmart Montana (TSM).

This project represents a concerted effort of public, private and educational partners to enhance the workforce development pipeline for a burgeoning Information Technology industry in our state. An industry that represents one of the largest opportunities to create middle-income jobs and buoy transitions within other industries being impacted by rapidly changing technology.

We understand that Montana's Department of Labor and Industry anticipates a worker shortage of at least 24,000 in the next decade. Recognizing that states in which Montana competes for workforce have similar demographic challenges, it is unlikely Montana will be able to recruit its way out of this challenge. We recognize that targeting the significant population of 17-29 year old workers left unengaged in the workforce during the Great Recession offers one of our best remaining strategies to efficiently find the workers we will need in next 5-10 years.

A paradigm shift in how we prepare people to work within our industry is required. We recognize that leveraging and enhancing existing training programs is necessary, but that new and innovative approaches are critical to ensuring that our industry has access to skilled and qualified workers. To that end, we, the undersigned, acknowledge that the role of the private sector as a partner in workforce development also needs to change with business playing a direct role. With that in mind, we have committed, along with a host of training and support partners, to play tangible specific roles in this project and put some skin in the game. While those specific commitments differ by company, each commitment is specified in the table below.

Business commitments fall within three broad categories: (1) providing guidance and continued feedback to colleges and other community education and training providers about their program's curriculum and design, (2) providing work based learning experiences, including on-the-job training, paid internships, apprenticeships, etc., that compliment other forms of education and training, and (3) intending to hire program graduates. In addition to private-sector contributions, myriad public and community organization are also committing to provide: (a) recruitment services to help funnel the target population into training; (b) support services that will help ensure the success of participants and (c) placement services to help ensure qualified employees are matched with employers in need.

In general, we acknowledge the need to increase the dialogue between employers and the public workforce sector in Montana. To that end, our businesses have been asked to provide feedback about the skills and competencies we would like to see in Montana's public and private education and training programs and have assisted in establishing goals for programs, curriculum development and program design. Businesses have worked with or have pledged to work with faculty and staff of partnering colleges and other education providers to identify specific groups of content, competencies and experiences that could be stacked on one another, each stack adding unique value to a potential employee. While these initial conversations have created new optimism about the potential to close the skills gap, we also recognize that our industry is constantly evolving and that this workforce conversation needs to be ongoing as well.

Therefore, should this project be funded, we are committed to continue our participation in a dialogue with project partners, helping to further pinpoint the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) and the credentials which best capture those KSAs at the onset of the project. Through continued engagement we will help training partners design programs that meet our needs and provide meaningful on-the-job training opportunities to develop specific skills best suited to that environment when possible.

The undersigned are committed to the success of the TechSmart project. To demonstrate continuing support for the proposed project, should it be funded, and in support of the proposed work plan, the undersigned agree to provide the services described below in conjunction with this project.

It is our estimation that creation of the proposed set of workforce training programs will have significant impact on Montana. If we are able to pull employees from local applicants, we have a significant opportunity to make a connection between the workers who need jobs and the industry partners with hiring needs.

Table Demonstrating Commitments of Partners to TechSmart Project											
Entity	Referral to TechSmart Programs	Provide guidance on curriculum content	Identify/Create industry recognized credentials	Provide Apprenticeships	Provide Paid Internships	Serve on Advisory Board	Hire Qualified Grant Participants	Expected High-tech Hires (2016-2021)	TechSmart Leadership and Administration	Support Services	Leveraged Resource Commitment Estimate
Business Partners											
1. Billings Clinic		X			X		X	10			11,250
2. CenturyLink		X			X		X	5			9,375
3. Connect		X			X		X	5			9,813
4. Computers Unlimited		X			X		X	150			15,000
5. Elation		X			X		X	25			10,063
6. Entre		X			X		X	6			7,688
7. First Interstate Bank		X			X		X	10			10,500
8. High Point Networks		X			X		X	6			9,828
9. Parsec Data Management		X			X		X	3			9,809
10. Phillips 66		X			X		X	10			10,375
11. Riverstone Healthcare		X			X		X	3			7,762
12. St. Vincent's Healthcare		X			X		X	7			10,188
13. Vertex Consulting Group		X			X	X	X	15			7,688
14. CTA Inc.		X			X		X	3			10,250
15. Employee Benefit Management Services, Inc.		X			X		X	5			8,750
16. Payment Alliance International		X			X		X	5			10,563
17. Granite Technology Solutions		X	X	X	X	X	X	20			

18. Acadeus		X	X		X		X	10			
19. Plastic Design and Manufacturing		X	X		X						
20. Blackfoot Telecommunication s Group	X	X	X		X	X	X	16			
21. DIRECTV (AT&T)		X	X		X	X	X	8+			
22. Cedar Mountain Group	X	X	X		X	X	X	20			
23. ONXMaps		X		X			X	17			
24. Submittable		X		X	X			25			
25. LMG Security		X		X	X		X	10-20+			
Referral/Support Services Partners											
1. Billings Adult Education	X		X						X	X	20,000
2. Billings Chamber of Commerce Group	X										
3. Billings Public Schools	X										
4. MT Dept. of Labor									X		125,000
5. 23 Montana Job Service One –Stop	X								X		150,000
6. Billings HRDC	X								X	X	10,000
7. Bozeman HRDC											61,020
8. Bozeman Job Service	X	X	X			X				X	12,000
9. Bozeman Public Schools – Adult Basic Education	X	X	X			X				X	8,000
10. Missoula County Public Schools	X					X	X				
11. Sentinel High School	X									X	
12. Big Sky Economic Development									X		49,400
13. Mountain Home Montana	X									X	12,000
14. Child Care Resources	X									X	48,000
15. Homeward, Inc.	X									X	3,000
16. Opportunity Resources, Inc.	X									X	12,000
17. Missoula County Public School's Lifelong Learning Center	X								X	X	72,000
18. WoRC/SNAP-ET Program	X									X	25,000
19. District XI Human Resource Council	X	X	X			X	X			X	156,807
20. Educational Opportunity Center - Missoula	X									X	
21. Montana Vocational Rehabilitation	X									X	20,000
Training Providers											
1. Career Transitions, Inc.	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	30,435

2.	City College, MSU-B	X	X	X			X					45,000
3.	Ikuw Solutions, Inc.	X	X	X		X	X					
4.	UM CodeSchool	X	X				X					
5.	Gallatin College MSU	X	X	X	X	X					X	135,740
6.	Missoula College - UM	X	X	X	X		X					
Key Business Affiliates – Placement Services												
1.	Montana High Tech Alliance		<p>The key business affiliate organizations agree to play several key roles in the TechSmart Montana project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rallying their membership to project start-up activities designed to identify key credentials, KSAs and assessments that will play a key role in curricula; Engaging their membership and helping coordinate a variety of on-the-job and apprenticeship experiences for students with business members, and; Assisting in the placement of qualified students at member institutions. 									
2.	Billings Chamber of Commerce											
3.	City of Bozeman Economic Development											
4.	Missoula Chamber of Commerce											
5.	Big Sky Society of Human resource Managers											
6.	Missoula Economic Partnership											
TOTALS		Expected Participant Hires from Existing Business Partners: 394				Amount Leveraged \$1,135,026			Leverage as % of Requested Funds = 29.7%			

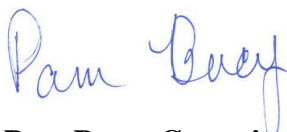
Signatures were copied and aggregated from individually signed letters of commitment out of logistical necessity. Please excuse differences in the quality of signatures included.



Chris Stevens, Vice President, CIO
Billings Clinic



Computers Unlimited
Chris Dimock, Company Leader
Elation



Pam Bucy, Commissioner
MT Dept. of Labor and Industry,
including 23 Montana Job Service One –
Stops



Matt Duray, President
The Connect Group



**Jason Moothart, Area Operations
Manager
CenturyLink**



**Daniel Hillman, Vice President
Information Services
Riverstone Healthcare**



**Brandon Eggart, President/Technology
Consultant
Entre Technology Services, LLC.**



**Mark Hinman
MT Division Director
St. Vincent's Healthcare**



**Kevin Guenther
Senior VP and CIO
First Interstate Bank**



**Jeffrey Walters, Chief Operating Officer
Vertex Consulting Group**



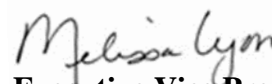
**Damon Andrews, Account Manager
High Point Networks**



**Jim Keller, IT Director
CTA Inc.**



**Aaron Ramage, Business Manager
Parsec Data Management**



**Executive Vice President of Human
Resources
Employee Benefit Management Services,
Inc. (EBMS)**



**Shea Dawson, Manager Finance & Public
Affairs
Phillips 66**



**Dale A. Jones
Payment Alliance International**



**Bill Proconier, President
Granite Technology Solutions**



Acadeus



Michael Gruff
Plastic Design and Manufacturing

Laura Marshall, HR Mgr, Blackfoot

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Laura Marshall, HR Mgr.
Blackfoot Telecommunications Group



DIRECTV (AT&T)



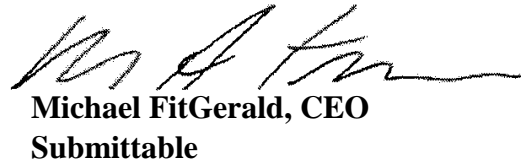
Blaine Salvesson, Development Manager
Computers Unlimited



Beth Jaffe
Cedar Mountain Group



Janine Unruh
Human Resources Manager
ONXMaps



Michael FitGerald, CEO
Submittable



Sherri Davidoff, Founder/CEO
LMG Security



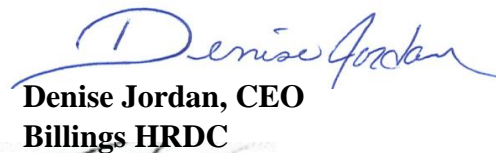
Brian Kroll, Director
Billings Adult Education



John Brewer, President/CEO
Billings Chamber of Commerce Group

Terry Bouck

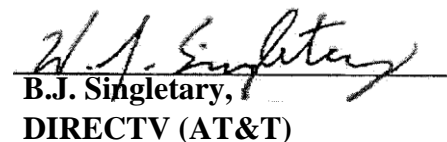
Terry Bouck, Superintendent
Billings Public Schools



Denise Jordan, CEO
Billings HRDC



Jeff Rupp, President/CEO
Bozeman HRDC



B.J. Singletary,
DIRECTV (AT&T)



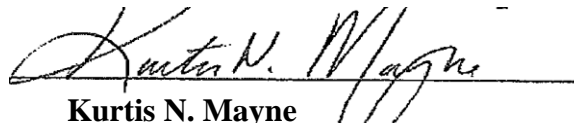
**Debbie Berg, Manager
Bozeman Job Service**



**Aaron Ramage, Business Manager
Parsec Data Management, Inc.**



**Brydeen Warwood, Coordinator
Bozeman Public Schools – Adult Basic
Education**



**Kurtis N. Mayne
Opportunity Resources, Inc.**

Russ Hendrickson

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Missoula County Public Schools

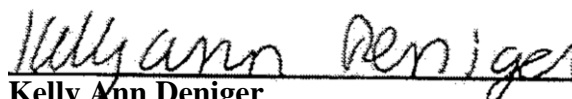
Russ Hendrickson

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**Missoula County Public School's Lifelong
Learning Center**



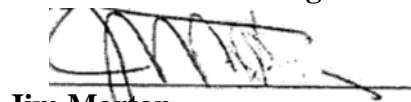
**Ted Fuller
Sentinel High School**



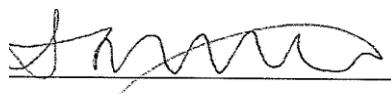
**Kelly Ann Deniger
WoRC/SNAP-ET Program**



**Brittney Sauza, Executive Director
BillingWorks**



**Jim Morton
District XI Human Resource Council**



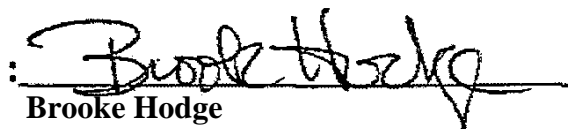
**Shelly
Mountain Home Montana**



**Jamie Kearra
Educational Opportunity Center -
Missoula**

Shelly

Mountain Home Montana

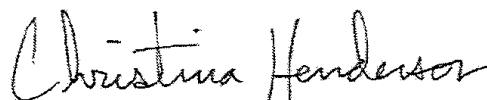


**Brooke Hodge
Montana Vocational Rehabilitation**

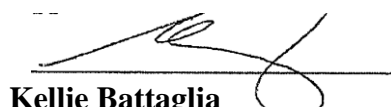
Michelle Parks

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**Michelle Parks, Assistant Director
Child Care Resources**



**Christina Henderson, executive Director
Montana High Tech Alliance**



**Kellie Battaglia
Homeward, Inc.**



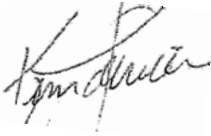
**John Brewer, President/CEO
Billings Chamber of Commerce**



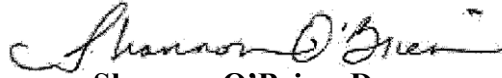
Brit Fontenot
City of Bozeman Economic Development



Robert Hietala, Dean
Gallatin College MSU



Kim Latrielle, Chamber Preseident/CEO
Missoula Chamber of Commerce



Shannon O'Brien, Dean
Missoula College UM



Deb Gass, Big Sky SHRM President
Big Sky Society of Human resource
Managers



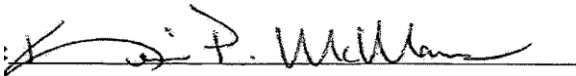
James Grunke, President/CEO
Missoula Economic Partnership



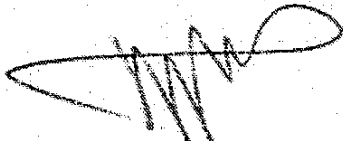
Thersia Hancock, President
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Cliff Coppersmith, Dean
City College, MSU-B



Kevin McManus
Ikuw Solutions, Inc.



Paul Gladen, Co-founder
UM CodeSchool